

FABIAN QUARTERLY

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The Fabian Society
Today *by* Harold J. Laski

Joint Consultations and
The Regional Boards *by* E. S. Napier

Foreign Policy *by* William Warbey,
M.P.

Book Reviews

WINTER 1947

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SIDNEY WEBB

by G. D. H. COLE

Let me speak first, before I come to the appraisal of a great record of public service, about Sidney Webb the man. Few have been simpler, or kinder, or more open in their dealings; few less selfish, less self-centred, or less conscious of self. Few have borne less malice, or fussed less, or made less parade. Few have been surer of what they wanted to do, and at the same time less inclined to push others out of the way. These are great qualities, above all in a great man; and they go far to account for the fact that now Sidney Webb is dead, there is, I believe, literally no one who has a bad word to say about him, or to suppress. Having nothing in his life or in himself to hide, and nothing that life had not given him to demand, he was a happy and contented person; and this happiness pervaded his conduct. In talk, he gave freely of his abundance, and gave so as to encourage and not to overbear. He was at the same time sure that he was right, and undogmatic about his rightness. "We think," he would often say; and the dual at once gave his judgment a certain objectivity, and stamped it not as dogma, but as the mutual fruit of discourse between two great minds. Beatrice was a good deal more dogmatic: her 'we think' had often a more commanding note. Sidney's tongue was never an unruly member: he could listen as well as talk, and pursue your thought as well as his own.

At Grosvenor Road, and later at Passfield Corner, there was an immense amount of talk. As I think back over more than thirty-five years, I remember great talking at Grosvenor Road, sometimes with just the Webbs but more often with a group. Later, at Passfield Corner, it was mostly with just the Webbs, when Margaret and I had gone down for a week-end. The common character of all these talks is that they were about something—never desultory. Either there was a piece of work or perhaps some Fabian or other collective activity to be talked about, or there was some definite theme. Each week-end, looked back on, had a defined shape: it was the occasion when we discussed so-and-so—not a particular person, but a policy, an attitude to some current problem, or the significance of some body of fact, historical or present. The Webbs never talked idly, or wandered from theme to theme. They talked about either what you wanted to discuss, or what they wanted to discuss; and, if you had nothing definite to throw into the circle, they always had. Usually, on such occasions, it was Beatrice who started, with Sidney coming in later; but if you took the initiative, Sidney was often the quicker to respond. Yet I feel that this, though true, may give an exaggerated impression of the difference between them; for often they talked as one, each taking up and amplifying or refining upon the other's point.

In youth, I was very arrogant; and, admiring the Webbs, differed from them violently about many things. An ardent young Guild Socialist,

I accused them not only of being bureaucrats, but of seeking to compass the Servile State. A phrase of Sidney's about "a discreetly regulated freedom" rankled, I remember, prodigiously; and I was very rude. What Beatrice wrote about me in her diary I do not know: what I do know is that, to all seeming, my rudeness made not the smallest impression on either of them. They did not even shake it off: they gave no sign of noticing it. That they did notice it goes without saying; but they thought it quite unimportant, or at all events I am sure Sidney did.

I mention this, neither for the sake of apologising for my conduct (which would be beside the point) nor in order to give the reader a chance of saying that it was the best way of snubbing me (which may or may not be true, but does not matter either) but because it enables me to say something about their—and especially about Sidney's—attitude to people. What concerned Sidney was whether I was likely to be of some use in respect of something he thought worth while. If I was, that was what he cared about: if not, he had plenty of other people to spend his time on. This attitude has again and again been called 'inhuman'; but it was not. Sidney selected his company on utilitarian grounds; but he did not behave impersonally to those who survived this test. If he was intimate with but few, he was humanly friendly with a great many; and his whole face often twinkled as he talked. He had both humour and good humour, as well as kindness; and in his human relations he was staunch and true.

At Sidney's omniscience I was never so astonished as a number of people seemed to be. I have known him get his facts wrong, like anyone else. But, whereas most of us are most positive when we are wrong, he was not. He was easily made aware that he had better verify his references; and he took advice readily from anyone who knew the facts. He could learn from men, as well as from books. His factual memory was, of course, prodigious; but he had an instinct that told him not to trust it too far. A long way he could trust it, because he had an orderly, docketing mind. His points came to him easily and naturally as (a), (b), (c) . . . in neatly logical order; and he loved a logically ordered universe. He was eminently a reasonable, and a reasoning man; and he saw human progress in terms of the advance of reasonableness in men's collective affairs. That was at times a limitation; for it led him to brush aside the inchoate thought that had not found logical expression. But, within limits, his logical faculty served him well: it enabled him to formulate the New Utilitarianism—the Benthamism for the Twentieth Century—that was the essence of the Fabian gospel—if gospel is the right word for so thoroughgoing a rationalism as his.

I have come from Sidney Webb the man to Sidney Webb the Fabian—a short journey because his public and his private life lay so closely together. Fabianism was essentially his creation—his, and no one else's. There might have been a Fabian Society without him; but it would not have lived, or had an '-ism' called after it. Doubtless, he only formulated and developed what many of his contemporaries were trying to think. His social philosophy came naturally out of John

Stuart Mill's, under the double stimulus of the Radicalism of Dilke and Joseph Chamberlain on the one hand and the Socialism of Marx on the other. It was being born while Radicalism was disintegrating even amid the popular applause that greeted the 'Unauthorised Programme' of 1885, and while Hyndman and his followers were failing to translate Marxism into a doctrine understandable by the British people. Under the impulse of this situation, Sidney Webb made, for good or ill, or for some of both, a peculiarly British Socialism, grounded in the British parliamentary tradition as much as the Socialism of Marx was grounded in the Prussian tradition of the 'police State'. Sidney's answer to Marx was to set beside the picture of the State as "an executive committee for managing the affairs of the governing class as a whole" (the quotation is intentionally inexact) a picture of the 'Welfare State'—that is, of the State as an instrument capable of being developed, with the aid of an extended suffrage and a responsible executive, into an agency for the promotion of the security and happiness of the common people.

How far he was right, and how far wrong, in thus stressing the 'welfare' element against the 'police' element in the modern State I cannot argue fully here. It is too large a subject. All I can say is that the subsequent history of British Labour, from Keir Hardie's I L P to the Labour Government of today, has been a practical working out of the Webb thesis, just as that thesis itself was a working out to its logical conclusion of the reforming Radicalism of Chamberlain's 'Unauthorised Programme'. There was already a tradition in Great Britain of limited, but successful, social reform—of Factory Acts, Mines Acts, Public Health Acts, Local Government Acts, Housing Acts, and so on, which had achieved real results in improving social conditions. What Sidney saw was that this tradition could not be effectively built upon so as to constitute in due course a 'social revolution' unless there were added to it socialisation over a wide enough field to put the tools of economic and social improvement directly at the people's command. He saw from the first the unavoidable limits of a merely 'eleemosynary' policy; and he seized on Marx's conception of progressive socialisation of the processes of production and applied it in his own way. He was the apostle of a 'planned economy' long before the phrase came into use; and he saw that there could not be real planning without a large extension of social ownership.

'Socialisation' had meant, for Marx, a process of social evolution which, even under Capitalism, was steadily converting production from an individual to a social-collective process. The growth of trusts and combines, as well as the aggregation of workers into larger groups and the developing interconnection of complex industrial processes, was an example of this tendency, which, Marx held, generated an increasing 'contradiction' between the social character of productive technique and the class appropriation and division of 'surplus value'. The culmination would come, Marx thought, in catastrophic revolution, which would bring the political and legal superstructure into line with the basic economic relations. Sidney, on the other hand, did not see why the change should not take place gradually, the transformation of economic

and political relations proceeding side by side and step by step as the consequence of democratic pressure exerted simultaneously by the enlarged electorate, by the Trade Unions and the Co-operative Societies, and by a steady appeal to reason made possible by the liberal institutions of free speech, free writing, and freedom of organisation. He did not say it could happen so in Prussia, or in Russia, where these conditions were not sufficiently present, if at all. He did believe it could happen so in Great Britain, and that in Great Britain, with its long tradition of parliamentary and responsible government, the change would not happen in any other way, or at all events could not usefully be worked for on any other assumption.

Thus, there was no contradiction between Sidney's views about "the inevitability of gradualness" in Great Britain and his thorough-going defence of Soviet Communism, with its revolutionary Marxist foundations. *Autres traditions, autres moyens*. When it was announced that the Webbs proposed to make a study of Soviet Communism and to visit the Soviet Union for that purpose, quite a number of people doubted what report they would bring back. I felt no doubt; and when, while they were away in Russia, an American magazine asked me to write an article forecasting their verdict, I asserted without hesitation that they would come back ardent admirers of the Soviet achievement, but also quite unshaken in their belief in gradualness as the thing for us. Indeed, the conclusion was obvious. The Webbs had no objection to revolution when it was the only way of reaching Socialism; but they did not regard it as even a possible way for Great Britain.

They were therefore able to admire the constructive achievements of Russian Socialist planning, which was designed to carry out, under Russian conditions, their own essential ideas. Nor did they turn a hair at those characteristics of the Soviet regime which made a good many of their British followers see, not so much 'red', as paler pink than ever. They admired the Russian, but not the British, Communist Party: they approved, as needed in the Soviet Union, much they were by no means prepared to tolerate here. Was this, as some have said, proof of their insensitiveness to the idea of personal liberty and their devotion to the mechanisms of a socialised society? Or was it simply an ability to see that different situations call for different methods? I think, up to a point, it was both. They were insensitive to the pleasures of aberration, and therewith to its value. They lived themselves lives so "discreetly regulated" for the service of mankind, and lived these lives with so little sense of being in any way hampered or restricted by the regulation, that they could not see anything amiss in a "discreetly regulated" society. They had no feeling that they were "confined linnets": their wide cage of disinterested service gave them ample room to achieve their hearts' desire. So they found it hard to realise why anyone should object to working within a fixed framework, if only the frame were well constructed to serve the end of general welfare. They were aware of this limitation, and were indeed rather proud of it. They used to dub me an 'anarchist'—which, I hope, in moderation, I am—because I felt differently and liked to see people kicking even

against beneficent pricks. They were quite willing, in duet, to call themselves 'bureaucrats'. The world, they would say, was made up of 'A's' and 'B's'—anarchists and bureaucrats; and they were all on the side of the 'B's'. They thought, I believe, that there were quite enough 'A's' lying in wait to mess things up to make it entirely laudable for them to throw all their weight on the 'B' side.

And yet . . . we must always remember that the Webbs, though they had no use for anarchism, had a very great belief in the virtues of associative effort. Were they not the historians and interpreters of Trade Unionism, of Consumers' (but not Producers') Co-operation, and of Local Government and the parish pump? Their bureaucracy was never *étatisme*: it claimed much for the State, but much for the group also. Only the individual seemed somehow to get left out, or rather to be told to fit himself in, and not to fuss. Surely there was enough choice of service for him to find his right place in the scheme of an orderly society, if he would but try. That they thought and felt thus was the basis of the charge of inhumanity so often levelled against them; and it was half, but only half, true.

Sidney, more than Beatrice, had a singularly complete lack of artistic appreciation. I do not think the essentially individual element in art had for him the faintest meaning. He was, of course, a highly skilled literary craftsman, and manipulated his personal literary style with high technical ability. Yet, though it was *his* style and no one else's (not even Beatrice's, as *My Apprenticeship* bears ample witness), it was all craft and never art. Those processions of capital letters, those significant lists of examples ending up with "and what not", those perfectly workmanlike sentences that said just what he meant to say, had never any quality of suggestiveness, of carrying the reader on with the writer beyond what was said into realms infinite and unknown. Sidney's style, highly personal in a sense, was personal above all in its entire impersonality. It was a sublimated blue book style, a feat of literary engineering rather than of the architecture of letters. It served its end; and Sidney did not care in the least if some of his readers chuckled at it, provided that he had made his meaning plain.

For the Fabian Society, Sidney did, over many years, a magnificent work. He was not only the fount of its essential ideas: he was also its almost universal and daily provider, going daily to its office and turning his hand and his immense knowledge to whatever needed doing. *Facts for Socialists* is a Fabian publication that, in edition after edition, has done good service; and the title might well be taken as his epitaph. Facts streamed from him whenever they were wanted—highly relevant, well ordered facts, which in their arrangement became more than mere facts and were fashioned into argumentative ammunition for Socialists of all sorts and degrees—arguments that in their day made many Socialists and helped many Socialists to convince others. The more he was stolen from without acknowledgment, the better he was pleased. It all went to help the good cause. He had no sense at all of literary private property, though, like Shaw, he preferred to keep his publications in his own hands, using his publisher simply as an agent and reserving full freedom to handle his books as he pleased.

In Sidney Webb, the Fabian Society has lost its creator, and Socialism its third great thinker, beside whom only Robert Owen and Karl Marx stand as equals. In Great Britain, Webb's influence has been as pervasive as Bentham's, and as deep. That, like Bentham, like Owen, and like Marx, he had the defects of his qualities, who shall deny? That the qualities were great, the whole trend of British social progress in the past half-century is his monument to prove.

● THE FABIAN SOCIETY TODAY

by HAROLD J. LASKI

The Fabian Society has reached a stage in its history when it needs more help more urgently than at any previous period. For the tasks to which it ought mainly to devote itself have changed. The Labour Party itself will naturally be concerned with the large-scale popularisation both of socialist doctrine, and of the factual material of which socialists must take account. The Trades Union Congress will devote the energies of its Research Department to informing its affiliated organisations of the views of its Council, the grounds for the policies the Council recommends, and the economic changes relevant to the workers' position in the world of industry and agriculture.

Both the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress are primarily concerned with research and popularisation within the framework of policies already approved by their Annual Conferences; each, moreover, must continually bear in mind the need to meet immediate issues which it is called upon to face by the problems of the day; neither can move very far from a basis which requires quick answers to pressing questions. And, since each is the official guardian of policies which it is intended rather to interpret than to originate, its independence cannot stray very far from the path of the recognised doctrines with which its members are familiar. Predominantly, further, they are bodies formed to take action, and their interest, therefore, in speculation and theory is bound to be small. In the special case of the Labour Party, its relation to a Parliament in which its members may well be, or seeking to be, the Government of Great Britain, makes critical independence in its published work very largely unavailable. Its function is predominantly to defend the policies of its leaders, or to attack the policies of its opponents. Imperative as this work obviously is, it needs no emphasis to realise that most of its importance is temporary in character. The long-term value it possesses lies in the significance it possesses for the historian who, at a later stage, seeks to explain the role of the Labour Party, or, indeed, of the Trades Union Congress, at a particular period.

No doubt the Fabian Society has every reason to continue the function it has so long, and so admirably, performed of popular socialist pamphleteering; it is doubtful whether any other socialist series available has rivalled the influence and help given to the Socialist Movement by the historic series of Fabian Facts published over the last sixty years; some of them, indeed, not least those written by the founders of the Society, have a special place of their own in the history not merely of British socialism, but of social philosophy in the last two generations.

But new times bring with them new needs. What British socialism, as a movement, now needs, above all, is different from what was appropriate even as recently as before the second World War. It needs, first

of all, to sponsor and to assist fundamental research into the basic questions which lie at the root of socialist philosophy—questions of method not less than questions of principle. Obvious examples are the economic theory of planning in a socialist society, the political institutions of a socialist state, the proper psychological relations between administrator, technologist and worker in the modern industrial process. But beyond these are questions which involve the critical examination of contemporary society and its working, often enough, as a number of Fabian publications have shown, hardly to be undertaken with any adequacy, save by co-operative research, in the light of the very scale of the material involved. The last fifteen years or so of Fabian research, moreover, have shown that the Society is bound, if it is to be of maximum service to the Socialist movement, to extend its range of vision from the purely domestic scene—outside which, save for one well-known exception, it did not move before 1914—into the field of international (including colonial) problems, which are now so intimately inter-related with the issues we confront in this epoch that they cannot be neglected without danger. On all these, and on kindred matters, the Fabian Society has two great advantages. It does not need to take the ‘official’ line on any question to which it gives attention; and it has among its members a large number of men and women with specialist knowledge and training who are willing to aid the Movement by collaborating in research work of this character.

There are two other important needs to which I venture to call attention. A general re-statement of socialist doctrine, a philosophy of socialism in all its major aspects, has long been urgent. How much it is required can, I think, be seen from the remarkable fact that *Fabian Essays*, now nearly sixty years old, is still in constant demand. The brilliant prefaces by which, from time to time, the volume of Essays has been made even more attractive by Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb do not alter the fact that the main work they sought so successfully to accomplish needs to be done again in the light of immense changes the Fabian essayists could not have foreseen, and, not least, of doctrinal challenges which have emerged from those changes. We badly want, also, not merely a first-rate short History of British Socialism, which sets its development in a full politico-economic context, but detailed studies on individual figures, and the reprint of vital documents, published and unpublished, which are now almost unprocurable. It is worth recording, for example, that the only complete set of the *Northern Star* is in Moscow, and that much special material, especially manuscript material, is moving increasingly across the Atlantic to American libraries. We need to safeguard the historical heritage of the socialist movement in this country before it is too late.

On its present annual income it is quite impossible for the Fabian Society to undertake research of this character upon the scale that is desirable. Many of its members give freely to it a voluntary service for which no gratitude could be too great. But if the work is to continue at the level that is urgent, if, above all, the Society is to undertake research which needs large-scale investigation, involving, as it often does involve, elaborate analysis of scattered material, or visits to people and places

far apart, or secretarial assistance on a considerable scale, the Fabian Society must have more funds. I believe it now makes an ample return to its members and associates for the subscriptions they pay. But with the all-round rise of costs in every sphere it cannot continue that return, much less move into more fields of effort, unless members are prepared to give more financial aid. We need higher subscriptions from existing members; we need new members who join the Society in the conviction that they must help it to aid the advance of socialism on the plane I have indicated. Above all, I think, we need an endowment of research which would enable the activities it involves to be properly financed without entrenching on the general functions of the Society. If I may speak frankly, there are too many members of the Society who take it for granted that their obligations are over when they have paid their minimum subscription—if we are to do the job of research and thinking that becomes so much more essential as Socialist principles begin to receive practical application, we must ask for much more than we have hitherto received. The case for socialism, especially the case for socialism in action, cannot be made on the cheap, least of all in the light of the rich and powerful forces arrayed against it. I hope, therefore, that I may appeal with confidence to Fabians to see that the means are rapidly forthcoming in order that the task of the Fabian Society may be fulfilled at the highest level.

● JOINT CONSULTATION —and the Regional Boards for Industry

by E. S. NAPIER

The Government has been accused—not always without justice—of (1) acting too slowly or too late; (2) planning too sketchily and keeping the details of the plan from the public; and (3) rushing through, almost as the clock strikes twelve, some improvised relief measure or incompletely thought-out scheme.

Over the need to gear private industry to the national plan no such reproach need ever be levelled at the Government. For in the Regional Boards for Industry, with their nation-wide network of District Advisory Committees, the country in fact possesses—if only it chooses to use it effectively—a ready-made organisation to provide the connecting link. What is required is the closest co-operation, both at National and Regional levels, between the “sponsoring” Ministries, the trade associations, the trade unions, and all other product and service groups. This means that the need for the utmost utilisation of the Regional Boards must be “sold” not only to the top-level civil servants, but also to the country as a whole and in particular to management and the workers. In connection with fuel allocations and the staggering of working hours to spread the power load in the critical months ahead, many industrial managers and workers for the first time will become aware of the existence of Regional Boards and District Advisory Committees. This chance of popularising the organisation, and fitting it logically into the National plan, must on no account be neglected.

THE HISTORY OF THE REGIONAL BOARDS

The Boards were first set up in January, 1940, under the term Area Boards and were given the over-all function of “clearing” industrial problems arising out of war production. The report of the Citrine Committee (Cmd. 6360), which reviewed their history and activities at a somewhat later date, makes no mention of any specific statutory authority under which they were set up. Probably, like many other and frequently successful British institutions, Regional Boards “grew up” on *ad hoc* lines. By trial and error they underwent periodical changes, sometimes beneficial, sometimes the reverse.

After having passed from the Ministry of Supply to the Industrial Capacity Committee of the Production Council, in May, 1941, the

● The author of this article, Ernest Napier, is an Industrial Accountant and Statistician. In a consultative and executive capacity he has been responsible for the reorganisation of several industrial undertakings. An active Fabian, he prepared the substance of this article for a research group on industrial problems, set up by the Central London Fabian Society.

control and guidance of the Boards was entrusted to the Production Executive. At that time the Boards were given several additional functions and duties. For our present purpose it is sufficient to say that the Boards were intended to assist the authorities responsible for the conduct of the war and the provision of supplies in assessing and utilising to the best advantage the country's resources in man-power, raw materials and productive capacity. The Boards also provided the machinery whereby individual manufacturers, as well as entire producing groups, were enabled to bring their requirements and their difficulties to the notice of the authorities at the highest level. However halting and imperfect this machinery may have been in the early stages, it is undoubtedly true that, as the war went on, the Regional Boards performed a highly useful function. They contributed substantially to the gathering impetus, the continuity, and the over-all effectiveness of the national effort at that time.

EMERGENCE OF THE "CONSULTATIVE" PRINCIPLE

Even before the transformation of the Boards in May 1941 there emerged, around the time of the formation of the Coalition Government under Churchill, the need for consultation. Previously no comprehensive system of consultation on production and supply problems had existed. Now, the Boards (which previously had consisted entirely of the chief local officials concerned with supply) were strengthened by the addition of three employers' and three workers' representatives, from whom the chairman and the vice-chairman were appointed. This broadening of the functions of the Boards made also possible a two-way exchange between two levels, namely the Production Executive and the Regional Boards. At the same time there was created a Central Joint Advisory Committee of employers and workers, intended to advise the Executive. Thus the consultative principle was taken a stage further.

The organisation was again re-cast in 1942, following the establishment of the Ministry of Production. The Regional Controllers of that department were appointed full-time chairmen of the Boards, assisted by two vice-chairmen, one each appointed by the employers and the workers respectively. A National Production Advisory Council replaced the Central Joint Advisory Council. The new body was composed of three representatives of the British Employers' Confederation, three of the Federation of British Industries, and six of the T.U.C., as well as eleven vice-chairmen of Regional Boards, of whom six were employers' and five workers' representatives. At that time, District Production Committees first came into existence. They operated under the Regional Boards and each Committee consisted of three employers, three workers and the official in charge of the district office of the Ministry. The non-official members of these Committees were appointed by the chairman of their respective Regional Board on behalf of the Minister. Clearly, the consultative principle was taking root and spreading.

POST-WAR CHANGES

Following the cessation of hostilities the Ministry of Production ceased to function and its powers passed to the Board of Trade. At

the same time the National Production Advisory Council ceased to exist as such, but was reconstituted as the National Production Advisory Council on Industry under the Chairmanship of the President of the Board of Trade. Its terms of reference now cover industry generally in relation to such matters as raw material supplies and allocations, factory space and fuel supplies. The Council consists of seven representatives of the B.E.C. and F.B.I., and seven from the T U C., together with the eleven Chairmen of the Regional Boards (who are no longer Government officials). Each Regional Board now consists of three or four employers' and a like number of workers' representatives, together with the senior regional representatives of the Board of Trade, Admiralty, Ministry of Supply, Labour, Transport, Fuel and Power, Food, Works and Town and Country Planning. In Scotland, whose industrial areas are served by one Regional Board, the Scottish Office representative frequently represents several departments in his person. Representatives of other departments, such as the Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture and Fisheries, can be brought into consultation as the need arises. The District Committees have been continued without substantial changes. The outstanding feature of the re-constituted regional organisation is that the Boards have been deprived of their war-time executive powers and are now purely consultative.

The present set-up suffers from three fundamental weaknesses. The powers and duties of the Regional Boards are not sufficiently stressed and publicised. The entire procedure for the selection and appointment of the non-official personnel at every level calls for urgent reform. The channels of communication are frequently blocked. These points will be dealt with in turn.

PUBLICITY

Though a recent article in the Board of Trade Journal gave an account of the Regional Boards and a list of their addresses, the Board of Trade Journal is not the weekly reading of the average works manager. (It would be a good thing if it were !) The C O I and other organisations should be called in to place information about the Boards in places where it will be noticed by all who could possibly benefit by it.

PERSONNEL AND COMMUNICATION

Possibly at the national level—in the case of appointments to the National Production Advisory Council on Industry—something may be said for leaving the right to appoint solely with the President of the Board of Trade, on the principle that a man is acceptable if he represents industry “generally !”. But this principle is the more unsatisfactory the nearer the system reaches to the individual factory and works. A systematic search for suitable personnel must be made among the smaller industrialists, the executives, technicians and supervisors, and the trade union rank and file. Otherwise the best brains will be drawn into the specialised work of the Development Councils to be set up under the Industrial Organisation and Development Act, and second-raters will chair and man the District and Regional Advisory Committees and Boards.

The problem of selecting the right men is tied up with that of making trade unions and trade associations completely representative. Below the Regional level, on the District Advisory Committees and in individual production units, complaints have been heard fairly frequently that directives on National policy, as well as information on supplies and priorities, coming down from the "sponsoring" or advising Ministries, tend to reach only the larger and more powerful firms through their trade associations. The far more numerous smaller and small production units, who are responsible roughly for two-thirds of the national output, frequently have no continuous contact with the regional organisation. This is due to the fact that the channel of communication from the regional level downwards runs through the various trade associations, in which the smaller firms are relatively few and there are many deliberate absentees. This tendency for the smaller productive units to stand aloof from trade association membership and activities—the picture, of course, differs from trade to trade—is due to a diversity of causes. One of the principal ones, of course, is that in many trade associations the "little man" is not welcome. His output contribution, while substantial in the national aggregate, is negligible individually. Moreover, owing to day-to-day pre-occupation with production, the manager of the small unit has not the time to serve on committees or executive bodies in the trade. Thus, when it comes to putting forward candidates for election to committees and trade association councils, the powerful firms generally are willing and financially equipped to "second" highly-paid executives for long stretches of, or even full-time, duty. It is these "seconded" executives who, in their turn, are encouraged to seek nomination as industrial members of the Regional Boards and on the District Advisory Committees. In effect, therefore, even if not in intent, many of the Councils of Trade Associations, as well as Regional Boards and District Advisory Committees, are "packed" bodies, on which the small firms are under-represented even under the most favourable conditions. It is therefore not surprising that the vast majority of the small producers is inactive in trade association work and fails to make its voice heard in the formulation of policy. It follows that, in quite a number of industries, the claim of the competent trade association to "over-all" representation is, to say the least, very flimsy, and entirely unfounded in some instances.

TASK OF THE UNIONS

A comparable state of affairs prevails on the workers' side. Taking an over-all view of industry their collective technical and practical knowledge of production problems remains largely unutilised in the national interest. This is partly because of the greatly varying proportion of trade unionists employed in industry. In the large firms trade union membership is substantial, but the trade union element is often split up among a large number of craft and specialist unions. In the small production units, on the other hand, trade union membership among the workers often is negligible and sometimes non-existent. There is probably quite a number of small "shops" in which, deliberately or by accident, not a single trade unionist finds employment.

This state of affairs leads to difficulty in setting up advisory or consultative committees below District level, and to a large part of workers' experience not being available at District level and above. But a difficulty much greater than these is that the workers' side, at best, can only be scappily informed on matters such as production policy, finance, costing, sales policy and administration of the individual firm, as these elements so far have been looked upon as the exclusive preserve of management. It follows that the workers in the past have been effectively precluded from forming documented, qualified opinions on problems outside their day-to-day acquaintance or contact with shop practice and the working of the factory generally. Joint consultation within the framework of the regional organisation will have to embrace every kind of problem if it is not to degenerate into an exchange of pleasantries or hard words without the least effect on output or the course and practices pursued by the individual management. It is indeed imperative that the workers' side shall be given authority to call for any information in the possession of the management, and to discuss with the employers' representatives on a basis of absolute equality every kind of problem arising in the factory.

FIRST MEASURES FIRST

Translation of the will to Joint Consultation into practical steps for the attainment of the objects in view will have to be preceded by certain relatively simple measures which only the Government can introduce and enforce. It is idle to pretend, as does the Tory "Industrial Charter", that Joint Consultation can be brought about solely by the will to make it work. The very demands for a concrete lead to the nation in this hour of crisis, voiced so widely of late in circles out of harmony with the socialist dispensation, stamp as fallacious and hypocritical the stressing of the purely voluntary and permissive approach. There is no need to envisage involved and, possibly, contentious legislation, now that the Supplies and Services (Extended Purposes) Act is on the statute book. But what is to be done must be done NOW. It can be summed up as follows:

- (1) Compulsory Joint Consultation from the shop floor upwards, including all executive and administrative grades with the workers, shall be written into a draft Industrial Charter, endorsed by workers, management and the Government. There shall be statutory safeguards against the disclosure of trade secrets and other confidential information to unauthorised persons.

The nature of the safeguards and the scope of the measure, as well as the means and method of approach, are well exemplified in the existing Industrial Organisation and Development Act for the setting-up, *inter alia*, of Development Councils in Industry. As and when the time is ripe for the draft to be revised in the light of crisis and normal experience, and to be translated into a statutory enactment of permanent application, it may well be found desirable to absorb the Industrial Organisation and Development Act of July, 1947, and to draft a consolidating bill covering the whole field of Joint Consultation and Industrial Research and Efficiency.

- (2) Regional Boards, and District Advisory Councils, constitutionally and organisationally modified and broadened in scope and purpose on the lines described, to be given statutory sanction within the draft Industrial Charter.
- (3) For the purpose of implementing (1) and (2), and of attracting and training a broad and growing stratum of men and women, temperamentally suited and educationally prepared to serve at every level within the complete Joint Consultation structure, facilities to be provided for the competitive selection, education and nomination of the best human material available.

This should be possible both by drawing on the membership and knowledge of the trade unions, and/or by utilising and expanding the existing and contemplated educational centres and institutions for the inculcation and study of managerial and executive knowledge and qualities. Within the terms of the Industrial Charter it will be necessary to make nomination conditional upon membership of either a trade association or a trade union. In the case of employers' representatives, corporate membership of a trade association by the employing firm shall entitle it to nominate any of its directors or higher executives, even though the latter may be members of a trade union as well. If trade unions as well as trade associations are to be regulated for the purpose of Joint Consultation, it may be found necessary to amend the existing Trade Union Acts in certain essentials. Here again, while the present difficulties of the nation remain to be overcome, the Supplies and Services (Extended Purposes) Act may obviate immediate legislation. As and when it becomes necessary, after the repeal or expiry of the Act, the benefits of Joint Consultation and of the regulated interplay of the emotional, organisational and technical forces in the sphere of private industry will have been given a fair trial under most exacting conditions. Is it too much to hope that, when the time is ripe, the statutory perpetuation of the set-up advocated in this article may be possible along agreed lines?

● FOREIGN POLICY

by WILLIAM WARBEY, M.P.

(This article is a review of "Foreign Policy: the Labour Party's Dilemma", by Leonard Woolf, with a critical comment by W. N. Ewer. (Fabian Publications, 2/-.) We think the subject of such general importance and interest that we are printing Mr. Warbey's comments on Leonard Woolf's thesis as a full length article.—ED.)

This is a stimulating and courageous pamphlet. It is the best attempt I have seen so far to present an analysis of the main problems confronting us in the international field, a fair summary of the different views and solutions advocated by British Socialists, and a line of policy compatible with the new position of Britain in the world. I disagree profoundly with some aspects of the policy advocated by Leonard Woolf, but his views will certainly provoke lively and valuable discussion throughout the Socialist Movement.

I should like to have seen a more comprehensive definition of the term "Socialism" in the introductory section. Leonard Woolf at first defines Socialism in purely (national) economic terms, leading to the premature (and incorrect) conclusion that "it is extremely difficult to derive any general principles of foreign policy from socialist beliefs"; later various additions and modifications are made, bringing in the concepts of "international government", "international equality", "prevention of exploitation of weak by strong", "the rule of law", "co-operation", "the common interests of the common people", and possibly also "democratic control". These concepts may legitimately be included in the preliminary definition, since they have long formed an essential part of the beliefs of Socialists of all shades (including Marxists and even, in theory at least, latter-day Communists).

From such a definition it would then be possible to deduce the basic long-term aim of Socialist foreign policy: world peace and growing economic prosperity and equality through democratically-controlled world government. (It must, of course, be made clear that such an aim is not merely a matter of dogmatic belief but constitutes in fact the only possible solution to the problems with which the modern world is confronted). This aim must be explicitly accepted by the British Government as the main guiding-line of its foreign policy.

Until the aim is realised, however, there must necessarily be, as the pamphlet states, an interim policy, related to the actual situation of a world of sovereign states, with conflicting aims, etc. Such an interim policy must have as its main motive the attempt to preserve peace and protect the economic interests of the British people *by means which*

● The author of this article, William Warbey, M.P. for Luton, is Chairman of the International Organisations Sub-Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and a member of the Advisory Committee of the Fabian International Bureau. He is the author of 'Look to Norway', and writes for various periodicals.

hasten, rather than hinder, the achievement of the ultimate aim: world government, etc. It is about the practical content of this interim policy that controversy will inevitably rage.

Leonard Woolf boldly draws the conclusions from Britain's relatively weakened power position and greater vulnerability to atomic warfare; i.e., that Britain must consciously accept the position of a, militarily, second-class power, that Britain cannot fight another major war successfully, and that the supreme objective of British policy must be to secure peace.

Where I think he goes wrong is in drawing from these conclusions the two further ones that (a) Britain should withdraw from areas of conflict between the two Great Powers and should adopt an attitude of passivity and disinterestedness towards their disputes; and (b) if war comes between the U S A and the U S S R Britain should at all costs remain neutral.

I will deal with the second point first. It is suggested that "we must not fight in the next (world) war", because whoever wins it, we shall be destroyed. I leave aside the political difficulty of persuading the British people, much less the British Government, to accept such a policy. The political difficulty is itself largely due to the serious practical and moral objections to such a policy. First, it is extremely unlikely that Britain could be saved from destruction by neutrality. In any war between the U S A and the U S S R a struggle for the possession of the British Isles would develop at the outset—the U S A to use them as a floating aircraft carrier and atomic-rocket platform, and eventually as a jumping-off ground for invasion troops (as she would similarly use Japan on the other side of the Eurasian continent), and the U S S R to deny their use. As soon as we were occupied by one Power (if not before) we should be mercilessly atom-bombed by the other, so our urban life would in any case be destroyed. There is one bare chance of our being saved by neutrality: if one side capitulates quickly, i.e., before the struggle for the possession/liquidation of the British Isles develops. But the probability of this happening is so remote that it is futile to base any policy upon such a contingency.

If we are likely to be destroyed anyhow, then (bearing in mind that in favourable circumstances 10 to 20 million might survive in the rural areas) are there any circumstances in which it would be worthwhile for us to take sides and to put up at least a token resistance (as did Poland, Holland, Norway, etc., in the late war)? I think there are. Of course, if the war is one between a reactionary capitalist U.S.A. and an expansionist, totalitarian U S S R, then we might feel that morally and politically there is nothing to be gained by supporting either side. But suppose, in the, say, 20 years' period before the war takes place, the U S A has become aggressively expansionist and ultra-reactionary (even semi-fascist), while the U S S R has become more democratic and less nationalistic? Or suppose, on the other hand, that the U S S R has become even more ruthless, totalitarian and nationalistic, while the U S A has moved decisively in a democratic socialist and internationalist direction? Any of these developments is possible, and must be reckoned with in long-term calculations. In such circumstances there would clearly

be the possibility of a relatively progressive or reactionary outcome of the war, and it would surely be desirable for the British people to side with the progressive party and to endeavour to contribute, even in the smallest way, to its victory.

There is even another, extremely important, possibility. The war might in appearance be a conflict between opposing nationalist and politico-economic ideologies, yet in reality, judged from a long-term historical standpoint, it might be a war for world unity and ultimate world government against nationalistic anarchy; in other words, a world-scale reproduction of the American Civil War. Can any British Socialist doubt that in such a case it would be our duty, and our interest, to go down fighting for world unity?

The example of the varying conduct of the European countries in the late war demonstrated beyond a doubt the value of an unambiguous partisanship and even of a token military resistance in stiffening the morale of a people, strengthening their resistance to reactionary ideologies and enhancing their international standing and reputation. The maintenance of moral and political values through a period of the most devastating physical destruction might well prove to be of supreme importance to the post-atomic war world. An atomic war *may* mean race-suicide, but it is not absolutely certain, and we cannot remain passive before even the barest possibility of saving something worthwhile from the wreck. I assert this without any confidence or optimism; but it seems to me impossible, until we know much more about the future trends of world development, categorically to assert the opposite.

There is a further argument against the adoption of an automatic neutrality policy which leads directly to a consideration of the second major point, namely, Britain's role in relation to the contemporary, non-violent conflicts between the two Great Powers. An advance declaration of neutrality is, of course, quite compatible with a passive role in these conflicts. It is quite incompatible, however, with an active role, i.e., with an attempt to exert whatever influence Britain can still muster in an effort to minimise and, if possible, remove these conflicts.

My main contention, in modification of the thesis argued in the pamphlet, is this. Since, as Leonard Woolf says, our major aim is to secure peace, then the primary objective of our foreign policy must be to *preserve* peace. We must seek, not to keep out of a world war, which I have argued is practically impossible, but to prevent one. The only foreseeable world war is one which, whatever its proximate causes, is substantially a death-struggle between the USA and the USSR. That is the war which we have to prevent, not by retiring to the sidelines, but by the active conduct of a policy of *mediation*. That will sometimes mean our being in the thick of the scrum and getting kicked by both sides, but that is part of the price we must be prepared to pay for the supreme objective of preserving peace.

The world is dominated by the mutual fears of the two Great Powers. Our role must be to seek to reduce these fears; where they are imaginary to promote mutual understanding, and where they have a real basis to eliminate their causes. We are cast for such a role because (a) we have most to gain by success; (b) we are well placed to understand the character

and the problems of the two opposing systems and even to produce a synthesis of their best elements (personal freedom and initiative plus collective planning); (c) the two protagonists have no reason to fear us, or to doubt the honesty of our motives, *provided* that we take certain steps to remove all ambiguity from our foreign-political objectives.

To achieve success in our role of mediation, two things are essential. First, as the pamphlet says, we must be, and appear to be, impartial towards each of the two Great Powers. But secondly, and equally as important, we must retain, or achieve, sufficient international political power to enable us to have a real influence on the attitudes and policies of these Powers. This influence must be exercised both in a general way throughout the world, but also particularly at certain key points of conflict such as Germany, Japan and the Middle East.

I have not space to develop the full implications of such a policy, but one or two things must be said. First as to "impartiality". At the moment we lean towards the American side, and we therefore have to *achieve* impartiality by reducing as rapidly as possible our dependence on the U S A and this not only, as the pamphlet rightly says, in the economic field, but also in the strategic field. Here some critique of British Foreign Policy during the past two years is indispensable. The Foreign Office has continued to pursue traditional strategic aims, especially in the Mediterranean (Spain, Greece, Turkey) and the Middle East (Palestine, Irak, the Italian colonies, etc.), which are incompatible either with Britain's present power position or with the desirable and possible aims of a Socialist Government. To pursue these aims we have inevitably had to seek U S support, which has taken the form of a series of explicit or implicit regional strategic understandings (publicly acknowledged in general terms by Attlee) in relation to the Mediterranean (now partly taken over by the American Navy), Greece and Turkey, the Middle East and the Pacific. If we now merely withdraw our military power from these areas, permitting or even encouraging the U S A to take our place, then we are favouring the U S A heavily in the building up of strategic positions for the conflict with the U S S R.

The same consideration applies to our policy in Germany and Japan. If we merely "allow the U S A to deal with Japan", as Leonard Woolf suggests, we are helping the U S A against the U S S R. If we allow the Americans to carry through their own policy in the Ruhr and to build up Western Germany as an anti-Russian bulwark against the time when American troops are withdrawn from Europe, then we are helping the U S A in its power-political struggle and *pro tanto* increasing the fears and the hostility of the U S S R.

No, we are so involved as a result of past policies that deliberate acts of extrication, and in some cases of opposition to U S policy, are essential before we can begin to appear genuinely impartial. The first step must be visibly to renounce certain of our strategic aims, as advocated in the pamphlet, and to call off the military and strategic understandings into which we have entered with the U S A. Specifically this means announcing our intention to hand back Hong-Kong to a democratic China; reducing our establishment at Singapore; withdrawing our troops entirely from Greece, Italy, Egypt and Abyssinia and, as soon

as new international arrangements have been made, from Palestine and the Italian colonies; substantially reducing our garrisons and bases in Irak, Transjordan and the Persian Gulf region; denouncing our alliance with Turkey (which the Turks, in effect, denounced during the war); denouncing the secret atomic bomb agreement made by Churchill in 1942, abandoning secrecy in atomic energy research, and renouncing all manufacture and use of atomic weapons; withdrawing from the Combined Anglo-American Chiefs of Staff Committee, cancelling the arrangements made with the U S A for the exchange of military information and the standardisation of weapons (or alternatively offering *exactly* the same to the U S S R), and withdrawing from the British-U S A regional security understandings. Such a policy will, of course, make possible an immediate substantial reduction in the armed forces, and a diversion of labour and materials from warlike to peaceful production.

Through the abandonment of certain out-moded strategic aims we lessen our dependence on the U S A and can achieve genuine impartiality. Through the achievement of impartiality we proceed to the exercise of mediating influence, to the advocacy and promotion of fear-reducing and conflict-lessening solutions of international problems. To be successful we must retain, and seek to enhance, our political and moral influence in the world. We should boldly assert our claim still to be a Power (even if militarily second-rate) with world-wide interests. We should assert especially our own economic interests: in free access to a reasonable share of Middle East oil (preferably through a public international Middle East Oil Corporation), and in the free interchange and movement of goods and services throughout Europe (East and West) and the Commonwealth. We should retain "flag-flying" garrisons and bases (pending genuine collective security) not only in the Mediterranean and Africa, as advocated in the pamphlet, but also in parts of the Middle East and the Far East (Singapore). We should maintain our share of the military occupation of Germany, Austria and Japan. We should retain small, but efficient, naval, air, air-borne and garrisoning forces and build up the Territorial Army.

Such military force as we can still display after such a policy has been carried out will not, however, have much weight in the scales of international politics unless we can supplement it by other means. Great Britain cannot be an effective mediating force in isolation; she must therefore seek to build up a *mediating group* of small and medium states of similar political character to herself. *This cannot and must not attempt to be a "third power bloc"* (as advocated, e.g., by Smuts); i.e., its role must not be one of opposition towards the two Great Powers, but of mediation, bridge-building, synthesis. Its political programme must be peace, achieved by the elimination of fears and the promotion of economic collaboration and equality, the promotion of democratic socialism as a genuine synthesis of the best in East and West, and the building up of U N O into genuine world government.

The ideal foundation of such a mediating group would be an *Anglo-French Union*. This we should adopt as one of the leading aims of our foreign policy, to be realised as soon as France is firmly set on a democratic socialist course. We should not wait until France has settled down

politically, however, before adopting a policy of closer association with her, especially in the economic field. Other democratic socialist countries of Europe (at first mainly Western and Northern Europe) will be attracted towards this nucleus, in close or looser forms of association. At the same time Britain should strengthen her political and economic ties with the Commonwealth, especially with Australia and New Zealand, thus maintaining her position as a power with world-wide interests, in the Pacific as well as in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The economic advantages of such a grouping have already been powerfully argued, but the political advantages are equally significant.

Such a mediating group would be in a real position to influence the course of events in Germany, the Middle East and Japan, where necessary drawing on other allies such as the German people, China and some of the Middle East peoples (if the Foreign Office has not irreparably spoilt our chances there !) to give added force to proposals which may at first be resisted by one or another of the Big Two. In Germany, for example, we should seek to prevent *either* the re-building of German heavy industry on a capitalistic or nationalistic basis, *or* the extension of one-Party government over the whole country. We should put forward solutions for the Ruhr, and for Germany as a whole, which are internationalist, democratic and Socialist; i.e., solutions which are viable, and which will serve to assuage the mutual fears of the USA and the U S S R. Similarly, in regard to Japan and other potential centres of strife, we should, far from withdrawing, exert the utmost influence we can bring to bear, in association with other medium Powers, to secure durable and fear-reducing solutions. We shall not perhaps have much success at first, but, as Leonard Woolf says, we must "try again and again" in the interests of world peace, and gradually our influence will begin to count.

Finally, we must increase our prestige and influence, and therefore our pressure on world public opinion, by example. We must show by our achievements at home that democratic socialism can work, and is a genuine synthesis, valid—with modifications—for the world as a whole. We must add what we can to the power and prestige of U N O, not only by seeking to use U N O machinery wherever there is a chance of its being used effectively, but also by taking the initiative in proposing solutions for the problems of economic inequality, the administration of colonial territories, the use of atomic power, the control of military bases and narrow sea-ways and canals, disarmament and the creation of an international police force. The more we can do in this field by example, without abandoning anything absolutely vital to our interests, the greater our influence will be.

This I regard as a possible policy for a British Socialist Government. It carries with it no automatic guarantee of success, and it requires infinite patience and moral courage, but it may win through in the end, whereas the alternatives proposed, of Great Power Alliances or of neutrality and indifferentism, can only lead to disaster.

● BOOK REVIEWS

THE INTELLIGENT MAN'S GUIDE TO THE POST-WAR WORLD

By G. D. H. Cole (Gollancz 21/-)

Professor Cole's new work, encyclopædic in its range of subject and assembly of material, is nevertheless far more than a sort of super *Facts for Socialists*, though it will incidentally be immensely useful in such a capacity. It "is addressed not to experts but to ordinary men and women of intelligence, and especially to those who, during the past few years, have had scant time or opportunity to keep abreast of current facts and ideas. . . ." It is a guide in that it covers the whole scene of national and international affairs, pointing to the salient features and describing their history. But, much more than a guide in that sense, it is an interpretation.

The author is in the tradition of the important popularisers and propagandists of British socialist thought in having a highly individual approach and outlook. Professor Cole confesses (p. 798) that "radicalism . . . is my deepest emotional response" which I take to mean that he has an instinctive unwillingness to accept conventional interpretations and existing institutions, that he is temperamentally non-conformist almost to the point of valuing dissent for its own sake. Yet anti-traditionalism has in Western Europe traditions of its own, and Professor Cole writes as a progressive who wants to see institutions changed but certain liberal values conserved. He thinks of these values as expressed primarily in the social and political ethos of the countries of Western Europe.

Professor Cole's doctrine of a sort of West European socialist middle way between the methods of Russian Communism and American Capitalism is not, of course, unique. But when he argues that different forms of society best suit different regions, this is not with him, as it is with some writers, a disingenuous apology for events which he cannot approve. The degree to which he is prepared to approve events in Eastern Europe is affected by his belief that "it is not a self-evident truth that counting of heads is under all circumstances the best way of proceeding". This qualification of the doctrine of elected Parliaments is not entirely alien to Western Europe. It found expression in the Syndicalist movements of Western Europe, by which Professor Cole was much influenced. In this book he briefly restates his Guild Socialist conception of industrial self-government as a long-term objective.

But, after making all allowances for the necessity and desirability of different ways of life, Professor Cole realises that the continued polarisation of the world between Russian and American influences not only prevents international economic development but would make war in the end not improbable. "The hope of a permanent peace rests . . . in the long run on an internal change in one of the two countries, or in both." These necessary changes would be the taming of American capitalism and the development of political democracy in Russia.

In any case, the author argues, to safeguard their own way of life, to avoid being squeezed in between the Russian-American struggle, and to develop their economies, the countries of Western Europe must plan and work together on a Socialist basis. "The problems of Western Europe are insoluble except on supra-national lines". He does not want military alliances between the Western European countries and sees no need for a common Parliament of the sort advocated by Federal Unionists, but advocates agreements on European free trade, supra-national transport schemes and European planning of industry and agriculture. Governments already exist in some countries which would co-operate on these lines and could exist in others "if only Great Britain gave the lead".

Even on the assumption that this last statement is true, it is a pity that the possibilities of joint European planning are not discussed in more detail. Some such schemes are probably practicable, especially in the fields of transport and hydro-electric power, though even here it is difficult to see quite where Britain fits in. But, beyond this, international planning depends on the existence of complementary needs and resources in the countries concerned, and it is no

apparent that Western Europe comprises a group of countries of the sort required. In the short run they do not seem able to contribute much to a common pool except joint needs for the same sorts of things. Increased German output would make solutions possible of many of Europe's industrial problems, but where in Western Europe can Britain look for her food and raw materials? Conversely one would have wished for more examination of the possibilities of a greater, though not exclusive, orientation of British trade towards the countries of the Commonwealth and of Eastern Europe. As Professor Cole points out, Britain is in no position to extend large credits for capital development in Eastern Europe, but that does not rule out supplying that part of the world with capital goods in exchange for foodstuffs. The New World's near-monopoly of, for instance, grain surpluses has made a degree of dependence on America since the end of the war inevitable for us. Alternative supplies are becoming available, although gradually, and should in the next few years make alternative policies possible.

This review has dealt mainly with Professor Cole's treatment of international affairs, since it is there that his contribution is most individual and controversial—inevitably so, when even among socialists there is considerable disagreement on foreign policy. On domestic affairs he writes expertly, if not for experts, and with a frankly partisan spirit that should be healthily provocative to the non-socialist. The publishers are thoroughly justified in claiming that this book of over 1,100 pages is phenomenally good value.

QUINTUS.

TRADE UNION STRUCTURE AND CLOSER UNITY (TUC 10/-)

The serious student of trade unionism will find this TUC booklet of considerable interest, for it outlines not only a new approach to an old problem, but traces the historical causes that make such a change necessary.

In its growth British Trade Unionism has followed no clearly defined plan but has been the product of the times or circumstances that saw its birth. Structures that were effective fifty or even twenty years ago are now cumbersome, and serve more as a brake upon progress within the movement. Whilst no direct reference is made to this in the booklet, the inference is there and cannot be ignored.

One of the greatest problems today is the enormous waste of energy and effort that arises from the internal warfare caused through competition and overlapping of interests. No attempt has ever been made to my knowledge to assess this wastage, but from my own experience I would not be rating it too high at 25 per cent. As soon as we start to assess competition and overlapping in terms of wastage, we realise the immensity and urgency of the problem. We can also understand why every few years some public spirited trade unionists endeavour to find a solution to this problem.

Every trade unionist who has given serious thought to the question of structure knows the answer to the problem, but to effect it is no easy matter, and the General Council demonstrates this very clearly. As far back as 1874 the need for closer unity was recognised, and steps have been taken on numerous occasions to define the ideal form of organisation to give this effect. But closer unity is not a matter for a blue print—it depends solely upon the unions themselves striving for closer unity and resolutely pursuing that end.

The TUC can do no more, therefore, than make recommendations for the purpose of achieving a close form of working between the unions catering for workers within the various industries. The people who are not fully conversant with the history and practical workings of the Trade Union Movement may consider that the General Council is bilking the issue, but when consideration is given to the history and working agreements of many unions, one can readily understand the fears that amalgamation talks produce.

Trade Union Structure and Closer Unity is not a blue print for tomorrow yet within its pages the keen student will see the broad lines of a more virile and integrated movement emerging. Whether this will emerge in sufficient time to permit labour to play its full part in national affairs is open to doubt. Having formed a political party to assist in the struggle to form a new society, it now finds itself being left behind by the movement it created. Trade Unions themselves

will not only need to study the document closely, but pay due regard to the inferences contained therein, otherwise they may find that today's indecision may force unpleasant if necessary changes upon them in the future.

HARRY G. KNIGHT.

FRENCH LABOUR FROM POPULAR FRONT TO LIBERATION By Henry W. Ehrmann (OUP 18/-)

Racing men are familiar with what is known as the Book of Form. By studying the records of individual horses—their pedigree, how much weight they carried when winning or losing, their trainers and their stable—the tipsters and punters have a guide for their forecasts. For those who are curious about the prospects of the C G T—and of France itself—in the nearing struggle for power, Dr Ehrmann's book will serve as a Book of Form. Between 1936 and 1945 French working-class institutions underwent a series of changes which revealed the weakness and the strength of those who stood at their head. Many of the men who took part in those pre-war events have been submerged in the general discredit of Vichy. But the decline of those who failed France is as much a lesson for the future as was the victory of those who saved her. Dr Ehrmann has done us a service in saving from an otherwise merited oblivion the ignoble and complaisant Trade Union leaders like Belin, who surrendered to the bribes of Hitler and the Etat Français.

During the sunny period of the Popular Front, organised labour in France reached a level of influence which it has never yet recovered. That it crumbled from its high position to a state in which Petain could presume to make of it a Labour Front, was due, in great measure, to the clash between the "Munichois" and the "anti-Munichois" inside the Trade Unions. The Communists were against Munich; the Pacifists wanted peace at any price. Daladier, attacked by the Communists for his appeasement policy, was anxious for a "show-down" with the Trade Unions. He found the opportunity on the occasion of the General Strike, called by the C G T on November 30th, 1938. By using his right of requisition, he mobilised public employees for work. The strike failed. The C G T lost prestige. The defiant mood of the working-class turned to apathy. And the 200 families made ready to embrace the alien dictator, who would save them from the importunities of their own working-class.

Almost immediately after the non-aggression pact between Germany and Russia, the balance of forces inside France changed. As Dr Ehrmann says, "The Communists' simultaneous desertion of the cause of anti-fascism, of the national cause of France, and of the cause of peace, was in itself sufficient to turn hundreds of thousands of French workers away from Communism".

The defection of the Communists in 1939 is something for which they will long have to ask forgiveness from the world's working-class. The Trade Union Bonzen were psychologically prepared for defeat. Pacifist-Socialists hardly cared for a pretence of resistance. But vast numbers of moderate Socialists who had clung to their belief in a united working-class, withstanding Nazism in uncompromising resistance, felt that the Communists had sold the pass. They, too, then joined in the fatalism of defeat.

Some of Dr Ehrmann's best chapters analyse Labour's position in the war-economy, and the unsatisfactory labour-management relations during the period of the phoney war. What emerges clearly is that the French working-class was never involved, either emotionally or physically, as the British working-class was ultimately to become. The *Union Sacrée* of World War I was never achieved in World War II. The nearest approach to it was in Britain's Coalition.

The third part of Dr Ehrmann's book is called "Vichy", and is a story of grandeur and misery. The Labour movement shuffled off the shame of treacherous leadership, and took its part in the National Council of Resistance. The Communists atoned for their betrayal of 1939 by becoming the *Parti des Fusillés*. A new C G T emerged, purified and strengthened by the savage persecution which it had endured and outlived.

Dr Ehrmann has written the best book on the French Labour Movement that has yet appeared in Britain. Factual, reliable and with a bias to democracy, it will instruct and encourage those who are concerned about France's future.

MAURICE EDELMAN.

● SHORTER NOTICES

REASON AND UNREASON IN SOCIETY By Morris Ginsberg (London School of Economics 327 pp 15/-)

In this first volume of a new series, Professor Ginsberg has brought together essays and lectures produced over a number of years. Neither events nor the trends of contemporary philosophy have given much encouragement to belief in "the possibility of a rational ethics and of progress in morals", particularly in the relations between the states. But Professor Ginsberg, subjecting facts and theories to patient, realistic, and above all rational examination, concludes on a note of cautious optimism. A sane and encouraging book.

K. H.

A HISTORY OF SAVINGS BANKS By H. Oliver Horne (Oxford University Press 18/-)

Historians will be grateful to the late Oliver Horne for his detailed work in this neglected field. He skilfully traces the growth of Savings Banks against the wider social background. These banks emerged from the ferment which followed the Napoleonic Wars and prospered under a system of local initiative and state supervision. Today the Trustee Savings Banks and the Post Office Savings Banks are important channels of National Savings and as a result of two wars and a measure of redistribution of income now number more than half the population among their depositors.

D. R. D.

ADVERTISING AND ECONOMIC THEORY By E. A. Lever (Oxford University Press 9/6)

A sane and competent discussion of the place of advertising in economic theory and business practice. Though the work suffers inevitably from the general lack of data on distribution in this country, many new facts and figures are presented in a convenient form.

The author, who is a practical business-man in the advertising field, shows a grasp of modern economic thought and does not hesitate to apply statistical devices to analyse the relation between advertising and economic activity. It must be conceded that the author goes far in proving that advertising has a definite constructive part to play in business practice.

R. W. E.

THE FOSTER HOME AND THE BOARDED OUT CHILD By D. M. Dyson (Allen & Unwin 6/-)

This practical little book, by a former Chief Executive Officer, Boarding-out, of Dr Barnardo's Homes, makes no claim to originality. Convinced of the immeasurable advantages of boarding-out over "Home care, however good the Home", the author knows the difficulties of finding the right substitute family for each child, and the right child for each family. Within her limits, she gives, with sympathetic common-sense, a more real picture of the many complex problems of "deprived" children than did the Curtis Committee.

L. L'E.

CHEMICALS, SERVANT OR MASTER By Bob Edwards (NLP 3/6)

In this book Bob Edwards shows, clearly enough to convince those of no party allegiance, how, through private and public neglect and through grasping at the immediate benefits of nation-wide and world-wide rationalisation, the British chemical industry has failed to maintain the leadership which the inventions of its founders once seemed to assure it. The author's case for reorganisation of the industry under public ownership are stated very briefly, and it is to be hoped that his positive and more detailed proposals will appear in a later book.

O. T.

LET COWARDS FLINCH By Sagittarius Illustrated by Vicky (Turnstile Press 6/-)

From Turnstile Press we greet this publication, a full-length satire penned by Sagittarius. Not cramped within a week's *N.S. & Nation*, the fun's elaborate, if not hilarious. The theme's the Government: the bard abuses their negligence to keep the Red Flag flying, in metre much the same as this review's is, while Vicky illustrates the versifying. Between the two a good six shillings' worth to move the Fabian to gentle mirth

QUINTUS.

COAL By D. R. Grenfell, MP (Gollancz 208 pp 8/6)

In this slim compendium on coal, the former Secretary for Mines ranges widely, having the advantage of great practical as well as administrative experience to draw upon. All that he writes, whether about coal-getting, miners' health or fuel efficiency, is sound common sense. But most people, for whom this critical subject has already been well popularised, will take much of this as read, particularly Appendix V on the provisions of the Nationalisation Act which occupies more than half the book. It would be easier to find a place for the work in an encyclopaedia than in the lists of current discussion.

E. V. F.

CHINA'S DESTINY By Chiang Kai-shek (Dennis Dobson 347 pp 15/-)

It is hard to understand the situation in China without the light that this book throws on the character of Chiang Kai-shek. With his own words Chiang Kai-shek effectively demolishes the picture of himself as a Christian leader striving for democracy that his supporters have tried to build up. He reveals himself as a firm believer in the Confucian tradition with its ideals of authoritarian paternalistic government for whom the Western ideals of democracy and personal liberty are as repugnant as Communism.

M. L.

ADULT EDUCATION—*The Record of the British Army* T. H. Hawkins and L. J. F. Brindle (MacMillan 15/-)

Army education dates from the latter half of the 18th century, when a sergeant or corporal "capable of teaching writing, reading and arithmetic" could be appointed as schoolmaster, but little progress was made until the end of the first World War. In 1917, elementary education was made part of the military training of recruits under the age of 18½. Lectures were organised by the Y M C A and other voluntary organisations and a real demand revealed itself for teaching in such subjects as motor mechanics, shorthand, typewriting, bookkeeping, mathematics and English. In 1919, Winston Churchill, as War Minister, declared that "education is henceforward to be regarded as an integral part of Army Training". A rebirth of the movement came with the second World War and the appointment in 1941 of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs. This movement, "as wide as society, as varied as life, the reflexion of democracy, to which it is indivisibly joined", is described by the writer and should give fresh impulse to post-war civilian adult education.

B. D.